

III. LOCATIONAL DESCRIPTION OF WAUPACA AND PORTAGE COUNTIES

Portage and Waupaca Counties adjoin one another in central and eastcentral Wisconsin. They are located approximately 100 miles from Madison, the state capital, 120 miles from Milwaukee, and 200 miles from Chicago. U.S. Highway 51, which runs north-south through Stevens Point, provides strategic state-wide access to both counties. U.S. Highway 10 and State Route 54 cross both counties and the proposed Ice Age Trail corridor in an east-west direction.

The eastern third of Portage County and all of Waupaca County share dairy farming and forestry as predominate land uses. The Wisconsin River in Portage County provides for a paper mill economy as well as a unique natural resource. Picturesque Waupaca County, with its kettle ponds and rolling topography, is known as a regional tourist destination. Both counties have park lands and private businesses which provide opportunities for hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, golfing, skiing, snowmobiling, and other recreational activities.

Stevens Point, located in Portage County, is the closest large metropolitan area near the corridor (12 miles west) with an approximate population of 23,600. Because of its size and location, Stevens Point is a center for both education and businesses such as the University of Wisconsin, Consolidated Paper, Sentry Insurance, and Ore-Ida Corporation. Waupaca, population 5,214, is the largest city in Waupaca County. Directly adjoining the east side of the proposed trail corridor, it has a strong industrial base as well as economies which are more reflective of those within the corridor--agriculture and tourism. Waupaca is known for its recreational opportunities provided by the Chain-O-Lakes, Hartman Creek State Park, and various public fishery areas.